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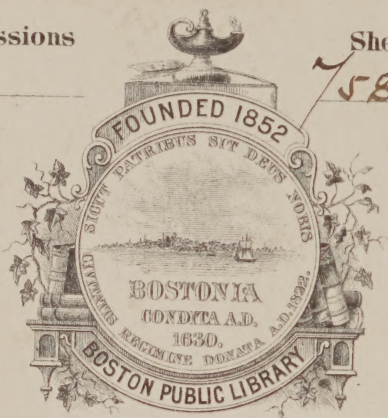
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AN

ADDRESS ON TEMPERANCE,

DELIVERED IN THE TOWN-HALL, BRIGHTON,

SUNDAY EVENING, DEC. 21, 1845.

—
BY FREDERIC A. WHITNEY,
MINISTER OF THE FIRST CHURCH.

258391

—
BOSTON:
BENJAMIN H. GREENE,
124 WASHINGTON STREET.
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Oct. 3, 1871

CAMBRIDGE:
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Brighton, Jan. 5, 1846.

DEAR SIR:—

In behalf of the Brighton Total Abstinence Society, we would request a copy of your chaste and eloquent address delivered before them, for publication.

With assurances of respect and esteem,

We are your obedient servants,

THOMAS SINCLAIR,
GEORGE R. HICHBORN.

REV. MR. WHITNEY.

Brighton, Jan. 7, 1846.

MESSRS. THOMAS SINCLAIR and
GEORGE R. HICHBORN.

Gentlemen:—I place at the disposal of the Society a copy of the address delivered by their invitation on the evening of the 21st, which was prepared with no view to publication, and amidst the routine duties of a pastor.

And, grateful for the friendly manner in which the request has been communicated by yourselves,

I remain

Your obliged servant,

FREDERIC A. WHITNEY.

ADDRESS.

WE have come here, friends, to consult for a great cause, — the cause of temperance. We are not here to be entertained, or to wear away these Sabbath evening hours, nor are we assembled for the ordinary purposes either of instruction or of recreation. We have come to think together upon a dreadful evil, if, perchance, God may thereby give us grace the better to heal and to shun it. Intemperance, — that fascinating, all-subduing vice, — fruitful parent of countless vices, — great source of wretchedness and woe, — this we are here to consider. And if there was ever a subject on which it was our duty, as the Apostle bids us, to “think soberly,” it is surely this. If there be one vice to which the human heart is addicted, concerning which all levity and ridicule should be put utterly away from our discourse, it is, in my estimation, precisely this vice of intemperance. And for this simple reason, — that one of the saddest features of the vice is its strange power to rob its subject of self-respect, — and, when that is lost, the shafts of levity

and ridicule only fix deeper and deeper in the soul the evil they vainly hope to expel.

With these convictions of the nature of the vice and of the mode especially to be shunned in suggesting its cure, I shall not plead alone this sacred Sabbath season in commending to you a more serious consideration of this subject than has always been given. The subject itself, apart from all times and seasons, bids us be serious, bids us "think soberly." It is no laughing matter in any way. We have no right to mix it up with all the buffoonery of the market, and with the ridiculous wrangling of the streets. We have no right to come here, or go elsewhere, and laugh an hour about it. In other aspects it addresses itself especially to our regards. As a sore evil in the social system, for which each individual is in a degree responsible, inasmuch as to each one God gives, in his several measure, the power of example and influence, it calls on us calmly to contemplate its remedy. As a sore evil in the *social* system shall I say alone? No! the state is not chief mourner for the vice, but home. Not civil interests suffer so much as domestic relations and the dear affections of the heart. Ay, after all, this turns out to be a matter of fireside tears, about which I have sometimes seen with sorrow assembled crowds make merry. And wives and mothers and children, yes, and our own kindred, too, suffer, we all see, and weep often when we do not see. And the good powers of the mind are paralyzed, and the sweet affections of the heart often wellnigh go out, and the bright eye of youth is dimmed with

a sickly hue, and the right arm of labor is unstrung, and, sooner or later, follow the sad train of physical disease, — of uncomforted poverty, — of want, without the honest, God-trusting face to tell its cause, — of outrage, wrong, and crime, — of death calling away the unprepared soul. This is not fancy's picture. These things we all see. They are not the casual, accidental consequences of the vice we are considering, but in some degree necessary, — integral portion, we may affirm, of the vice itself. No palliating sophistry can wink them out of sight. And I cannot understand how the good heart can speak of them, or think of them, but with seriousness and sorrow. The merry jest and the smart repartee have no place when we are dealing with such realities. One great injunction seems laid on us, namely, that we “think soberly,” — that so deliberately and the more resolutely we may help lift off the crushing burdens of this giant vice.

We need thus to feel our own personal relation to the vice of intemperance, — or, whether we are its direct subjects or not, we shall not be likely to use the influence we can command for its removal. None can say that they have nothing to do with the temperance reform. All who are in any way the subjects of intemperance have certainly much to do with the temperance reform, as they value the welfare of their souls. And all who are themselves free from the vice are morally bound, are they not? as well-wishers for the virtue of their fellow-citizens, as those who desire to establish the morals of the community, to give the whole weight of their example, the whole force, be it

small or great, of their individual opinion, towards the establishment of a righteous public sentiment. Much good comes, in this way, from simply affixing to the temperance pledge, of which presently I will speak, the names of those who have not needed its restraining influence to deter from the use of intoxicating drinks. That act, not to speak of the encouragement it affords to those who might fall away, is, itself, a righteous verdict,—a wholesome utterance, silent, yet not unheard,—small, yet not unfelt in making up the great sum of public opinion in which, in our land, law finds its only lasting sanction, and by the concurrence of which alone can law be sustained.

It appears, then, that, as the friends of temperance, we must have another aim than the mere enforcement of law,—an aim, I mean, of the fulfilment of which law shall be a true expression. And as this point is perhaps awakening a more general interest in the community than any other connected with the reform, let us here give it that consideration which can be devoted to it in a brief address, in which other, though less important topics, will demand a passing notice.

Let no man feel, then, that legislation is to release him from his own personal obligations to the cause of temperance. Let no man believe that law can take this matter out of the hands, the hearts, the consciences of individual members of the community, and make all right and our homes all pure. It were a pleasant dream, but we shall wake and find that it was but a dream. We can rest on nothing in entire security from the evils of intemperance but on a correct and

righteous public sentiment, — on the aggregate and irresistible verdict of individual will, individual example, effort, encouragement. So long as human ingenuity can frame legislation, so long will the same ingenuity devise means for evading its enactments, if there be not, behind all legislation, this united, harmonious force of public opinion. Just sentiment, moral and religious principle, correct practices in ourselves and all about us touching the vice in question, — this must form our great bulwark of defence, or law will remain but parchment, or, perchance, furnish temptation to the sins of falsehood, deception, and hypocrisy, which must go, more or less, with law evaded and broken.

I am aware that wise and good men differ in their opinions with regard to the place which law should hold in the work of moral reform. But I shall not hesitate, therefore, to utter my own convictions that it cannot hold the first place. And we are inquiring now what should. We are seeking, I trust sincerely, to know what should be our first and chief aim, as those who desire the prevalence of temperate habits in our community. Gladly would I hail each act of civil legislation that would set the heart right. Every penal law written among human statutes would I rejoice in, if only it would do that work of inward, moral purification, which, I firmly believe, is only to be effectually done by individual effort, by personal denial and devotion to virtue, under the serious conviction of duty and of accountability to Almighty God. The experience of the few last years has revealed too many pitiful evasions of the best devised laws to allow

me to look in that quarter with the most sanguine hope for public reform. We have seen, that, where spirit might not be sold, it has still been found a profitable business to sell water and give away spirit. We have known that, where, from the fear of the law, it might not be drunk before the eyes of men, it has been still plentifully used out of the public sight. It is not strange. It will, it must, be so. The great principle of political economy will not stop for our legislation, that demand, namely, shall create supply. We want to check that demand. God sees no virtue in the hearts of such as are deterred from the use of intoxicating drinks from no will, no choice of their own, but because, for a time, perchance, the law has imposed its imperfect outward restraint. The Saviour's morality, as but a few only of his expressive precepts would declare, should teach us better wherein consists the essence of virtue. Not so much in the act, he tells us, as in the motive, lies the vice. There is no temperance without the individual surrender of low and debasing appetite to virtuous and godly principle. I cannot much exult over the fancied security of him whose steps the civil law must track by day and night. He has no security. He is far off from God in his law-inflicted sobriety. I know not that he would be any farther off, if, in practice evading the law, as in heart he has evaded it, he were no longer sober. Legislation, in short, will not purify the heart;—and for this dreadful moral disease I will name no remedy to be applied, primarily and above all others, that cannot do this. The fountain must be touched and sealed,

or the corrupt waters will force their way through the community. Feeble legislation, that only says they shall not flow, fretting, not healing, the poisoned fountain! The law for which first we must strive is the unwritten law of public opinion. The verdict for which we will pray, against the traffic and use of that which deals wretchedness around, should come first, not from the jury-box of the court, but from the mightier bar of the people's will. It must be the united verdict of our homes. It must be the concurring sentiment of men and women, of the young and the old, concerning the fearful character and effects of this vice,—a sentiment strong in its union, and efficient through the force of individual practice and example.

Law has its place, as public sentiment advances to its maturity, to confirm, concentrate, and give united action to that sentiment. But it cannot be the basis of moral reform. Under institutions like our own, it presupposes a work already wrought in the community. That work, unless I mistake the signs of the times, is not yet done. Intemperance is not yet enough practically acknowledged the evil which in theory it is confessed to be. Intoxicating drinks have been proved, as I think with all the clearness and force of mathematical demonstration, to be actually diluted poisons in the human system. Yet, practically, the community does not believe this, and its hearty reverence cannot be given to the law that virtually declares the truth. The astounding fact that alcohol is never digested in the human system,—not from

any disarrangement of the system, not from any disorder among the organs of digestion acquired before its introduction, but simply because of its own nature, simply because it is a poison, — is this practically acknowledged? O, how clearly has God spoken here! Could a voice out of his holy heavens more impressively have admonished us not to take into this system, so “fearfully and wonderfully made,” what the system cannot bear, what it labors at once to expel, what disturbs most its most sensitive organization, what disorders the whole, and involves in a darker ruin the precious soul that for a season dwells there? “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good, and what the Lord thy God doth require of thee!” God has written in the very laws of our physical nature, in the very character of those substances with which we abuse our nature, unequivocal testimony to his will and to our consequent duty. But legislation never teaches this. No! and touching this vice of intemperance, which begins its sad wreck on the physical frame, there is still too much indifference in the community to these clear teachings of God. There is still much of moral apathy, much of practical unbelief as to the enormity of this vice, a lack of the sense of personal responsibility as to practice and example, — a feebleness, in short, of public opinion and will, which must render legislation comparatively powerless. Let it do whatever it may for the good cause of temperate habits in our midst, and may God prosper the right! But for us, friends, believe me, it must not be held as the sheet-anchor of our hopes. It will not, as

with a magic power, exorcise the evil spirits from those with whom, perhaps, we are bound in kindred, and whom we would so rejoice to behold virtuous and free. It will not make nor keep temperate the young, while neither they nor their parents or friends are careful to cherish in them virtuous principles. Law will not purify our homes, I repeat, till, each and all, we feel and express the power of a vigorous and united will. Counsel and entreaty must work out conviction. The mind and the heart must prevail over the force of outward restraints. The spirit which God inspired must triumph over the potent spells of that material spirit which man has invented. In the power of faith, in the fervor of love, in the concentrated union of single hearts and wills in a living righteous sentiment, must be found our defence ; a shield of protection from the ravages of this vice, and a retreat inviolable for the majesty of law.

I have thus stated, as best I could in these brief limits, the ground which, as the friends of temperance, it becomes us to maintain, and the relation of law to the temperance movement. If we would but feel how God is calling on us, as citizens and as brethren, to put away this evil from among us by the joint weight of our opinions and practices, the ways and means should not long be wanting. We need not so much more light and information on this oft-treated subject, as we need to give efficiency to our convictions, to quicken our consciences, and make our own practices tell for the mutual encouragement and establishment of one another in the habits of virtue. For this reason

it seems needless, at this time, to go over the ground which has been lately so fully trodden by those who have preceded me in this place. You cannot ask to have again spread before you in detail the legitimate effects, physical and moral, of the vice in question. They have been drawn out, already, with every variety of illustration. One is strongly tempted, in rising to speak on this subject, to seek to interest his audience with the heart-rending narrative of outrage and crime perpetrated by the unhappy victims of intemperance. The press is daily pouring forth such recitals. It has become so common to weave them into the lecture and the address, that I sometimes fear, lest by their very repetition we may grow insensible to their enormity, as the mighty roaring of Niagara is scarce heard, the day long, by the busy workman near its banks. We know full well the dreadful story. We know that neither age, nor sex, nor station, nor condition in life, is free from the inroads of this great destroyer. We know, as the statistics of intemperance do reveal to us, with all the accuracy of figures, that the number of those who die annually in the United States, in the ruin of body and soul induced by this vice, amounts, on reasonable calculations, to nearly thirty thousand, — five hundred each week, and two murders. We know, from tables carefully prepared, that four fifths of all the paupers, that two thirds of all the imprisoned debtors, that something more than one half of all the lunatics and maniacs, that three fourths of all the criminals, are the direct, well ascertained consequence of intemperance. Then is it true, as has been affirmed,

that the greater part of our prisons, our almshouses, our lunatic asylums, are necessary only because of the prevalent intemperance, and the whole burden of their expense on public and private charity is a tax on the sober and industrious. This sum, as calculated a few years since, from authentic data, by the Hon. Judge Cranch, of the United States Court, was stated, in official documents, as the vast amount of ninety-four millions of dollars.

These facts and statistics, gathered from reliable sources, are useful as an index, imperfect though it be, to remind us of the magnitude of the evil we would oppose. Beneath their bare detail, what heights and depths of unutterable misery are concealed! We read them, perhaps, coolly over, without thinking that possibly, by our own practices, by our own remissness in contributing, according to our several relations and influence, to reclaim and save the fallen and the tempted and to promote a manly and righteous sentiment in the community, we have helped to swell the awful sum. They are full of warning. They exhort, how forcibly! each conscious subject of this ensnaring vice to hasten to choose the paths of virtue, lest he come unawares into the sad lists they recount. They entreat us, if happily free ourselves from the vice whose woe they but inadequately represent, to speak the good word, to do the kind office, wherever a fellow-being may be reclaimed, or the least weight may be added to a pure and growing public opinion. With all the tenderness expressed in the parable of the Prodigal Son, they beseech us, fathers or mothers,

brothers or sisters, kindred by remote or by the closest ties, if, in the circle where God has set us, any have fallen, that we strive by the winning powers of earnest affection to restore them, and to induce them for ever to renounce what so inevitably leads down to the chambers of physical disease and of spiritual death.

And what is it that does this? What is that substance from the use of which as a beverage we would so urge men to abstain, and especially the young, whose habits are now more than ever within their own control? Do we really know what it is? Let us dwell a moment longer among the details of our subject for confirmation on this point, and that with clearer grounds we may urge home the plea of abstinence. I have spoken of intoxicating drinks as diluted poisons in the human system. I believe they are such. Alcohol,* their essential ingredient, ranks among the most active poisons. It is not a simple natural production, but comes from fermentation and distillation.† Science has classed it, in its operations, with

* The author is indebted for information on the nature and effects of alcohol to the treatise of Professor Hitchcock, and to other scientific writers, who have recently investigated the subject at large. Great service, it is apprehended, would be rendered to the cause of temperance, could the most important facts and experiments connected with the single article of alcohol be placed in a popular form before the community, independently of all other considerations connected with the cause. The disclosures, made in this country and abroad, touching the nature and effects of this single substance, and the extent to which it enters into all intoxicating drinks, have been ample and conclusive.

† "It may perhaps be worth remarking, that, throughout the widespread kingdoms of animal and vegetable nature, not a particle of alcohol, in any form or combination whatever, has been found, as the effect of a

those most deadly poisons, hemlock, poison-sumach, henbane, thorn-apple, and prussic-acid. These, as we are assured, produce nausea, vertigo, temporary exhilaration of the spirits, subsequent stupor, and final insensibility. Precisely such are the effects of alcohol. These are never digested, but do impair the organs of digestion and lead most naturally to mental imbecility, to palsy and delirium, and so does alcohol. These effects, indeed, usually follow in slight and gradual degrees from spirit as commonly drunk, because the alcohol is diluted. I learn that the highest proof spirits yield a quantity of alcohol amounting to about half their bulk. And of all the wines, so called, in common use, I believe that this same virulent poison enters largely into the composition. Seldom will our means allow us what is truly wine. In this day of corrupted liquors, true wine is no common beverage in the community. A large portion of what passes under the name is this same poison, in union with other compounds. These compounds often are essentially deleterious, as well as the alcohol they blend with, — and at some of them, let me assure you, my friends, we should shudder, to think such had ever passed our throats, as the chemist, with a certainty from which there is no appeal, shows them to us on his table, among his crucibles and retorts.

Experiment * has proved that a very small quantity

single living process, — but that it arises only out of the decay, the dissolution, the wreck of organized matter, or of its ever-varied and wonderful productions.” — Professor Mussey’s Prize Essay, p. 62.

* Professor Hitchcock, as above.

of this alcohol, administered to one of the domestic animals, produces speedy death. And not very rare are the cases in which alcohol, even diluted, has proved almost immediately fatal to men. That such is not its constant result does not invalidate the testimony as to its essential character, since even the other active poisons may be taken in minute quantities into the system, without at once destroying life. Alcohol does not the work of human sustenance in the system, and therefore must do harm. As if conscious God never sent it into the human body, it seeks to force its way out of the blood, into which it is received, along the slight vessels and through the pores of the skin, irritating and disordering wherever it goes. It has been extracted from the brain of the intemperate after death, so clear and unchanged as to blaze at once, on the application of fire. What an article to go as a beverage into the system! What a substance for man, endowed with reason, therewith to defile the temple of the spirit God bids him keep pure! What an article, this poison simple, for woman's use,—for the mother, especially,—must it be spoken? what an article in any of its forms to course along her delicate veins, and thence sow in her infant's susceptible system, by an inevitable law, the early seeds of disease and of vitiated appetite! The facts by science revealed might speak to us on this point with a force and a pathos to which my words could give no fit expression. They should be known, they should be thought of, till one consenting voice went up from woman's mighty sphere of influence, vowing to put away from her lips this subtle

poison, — from the nursery, where, in mild but most pernicious forms, it is often found, the deadly drug, — and to contribute, by her rightful, God-appointed sway over man, to the establishment of that righteous, active sentiment in the community, before which, sooner than before the terrors of the law, this sad evil is to cower and pass away.

We are thus brought back to the essential principle on which, at the outset, this discourse was based, and reminded of our duty, men and women, young and old, all, of our duty reminded, to help put away from among us this vice, by the joint testimony of our daily practices and example, by a living public opinion and will. This is the only force which heals and saves the soul, while it establishes and guards the outward institutions of society. On this principle the temperance association exists in our land, — that individuals, whatever their station and limit of personal influence, may, by the joint weight of their names, by the concurring testimony of a good purpose, by the power of a virtuous will, approved by God and attested by men, bear witness to their own love of purity, their wish for the welfare of their fellow-men, and for the good name and true prosperity of their community.

I confess that the association, and the pledge which thus it implies, commend themselves to my judgment and heart. The purpose of the pledge of abstinence from intoxicating drinks is twofold. It is not designed alone for him who takes it, but seeks a mutual good. It recognizes the importance of the social principle, because the vice it would banish is so peculiarly a

social vice. It is a free, voluntary act. No outward law imposes it. It deals with the will of the individual. It records and confirms the righteous resolution. It may involve for you no sacrifice whatever, so far as appetite is concerned, and thus, you think, be useless. Still, it will assuredly help the wavering and the often tempted. Or a trifling sacrifice it may involve for you, and shall not this be made for others' sake? Or a great sacrifice it may involve for you, and then, for your own sake, as well as for others, by your own hopes of virtue, by your own dear love of reputation and honor among men, by your own wish for success and peace and joy in life and God's acceptance at last, should not the sacrifice be made? Resolutely, as becomes a great and holy purpose, — cheerfully and gladly, as conscious that all good men and all good influences will work with you and help you, should you not make the sacrifice to a sinful appetite? Seriously and reverently, as mindful that God is with you in every righteous purpose for self-improvement, and that your weakness is alone perfected in his strength, should it not be made? Even with the departing hours of the waning year should it not be made by you, as conscious that the next may, perhaps, bear you to your final account?

I have thus fulfilled the invitation extended to me by the Brighton Total Abstinence Society to address them on the subject of temperance in this place. On other topics embraced in the general subject I hoped to have spoken, particularly on the domestic influences of home, as cherishing the early growth of temperate

habits, — upon the early influence of parents on children, of sisters on brothers, as inciting to virtue. But on these and kindred topics I shall from time to time discourse, as I have hitherto done, standing in another place, and the hour is wellnigh spent. Yet take these closing words, gleaned by another hand from the volume of our common faith and reverence, to be borne away in our memory, profitable alike for doctrine and reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness.

“Remember that ‘no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.’ Remember that ‘the kingdom of God’ (that heaven into which, after all, every man hopes to enter and for which he must prepare himself) ‘is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.’ Remember, and ‘whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God,’ and as those who were created in God’s image. If you are strong, seek not to please yourself merely, but be willing to bear the infirmities of the weak, remembering Him who has borne yours and how liable you yourself are to infirmities yet to come. And to such as are most engaged in the cause, let me say, while striving for the virtue and welfare of others, ‘Take heed unto yourselves.’ Be steadfast, but sober-minded, temperate in all your feelings and expressions. Remember how the Apostle bids you ‘add to temperance patience, and to patience brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.’ Remember that ‘the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (and last, not

least) meekness, temperance.' Let the two qualities of temperance and meekness, which are here placed so close together, be seen equally close in your conduct and conversation. Let not the cause be dishonored, either by neglect or by abuse."

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Notes.

PPLEMENTARY catalogue of the East Boston
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Branch Library has issued convenient
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Ninth Edition of the Handbook for Readers
 t been published. It contains the Rules and
 tions, Helps to the Library and its Cata-
 Accounts of the special collections of books
 the works of art, a Chronological history
 Library, and an extensive Index to Period-
 helpful guide to Encyclopædias, etc., etc.
 arged edition contains all the above-men-
 matter with the addition of the valuable
 ue of Bibliographies and Literary Guides,
 ed previously in the Bulletin for April,
 Price of large edition, 50 cents, of regular
 5 cents.

Gifts. — Among the gifts to the Public Library
 during July, August, and September, 1890, have
 been the following: From Rev. Caleb D. Bradlee,
 6 volumes, 179 pamphlets, a lot of newspapers and
 broadsides; Dr. Francis H. Brown, 60 pamphlets;
 George A. O. Ernst, 131 volumes, 21 pamphlets;
 O. M. Fernald, 5 volumes, 94 pamphlets, besides
 newspapers; Great Britain Commissioners of Pat-
 ents, 30 volumes; Chester Guild, 55 pamphlets;
 Dr. John Homans, 28 volumes; George B. Knapp,
 109 volumes, 98 pamphlets, a lot of newspapers;
 Leicester Public Library, 39 town reports; Arch-
 duke Ludwig Salvator of Austria, a copy of his
 recent work "Die Insel Menorca"; Miss S. L.
 Mansfield, 67 pamphlets, a lot of newspapers;
 Joseph Pauksztis, 18 volumes; Portland Public
 Library, 48 pamphlets; St. Botolph Club, a number
 of periodicals; Samuel S. Shaw, 1 volume, 20
 pamphlets, a lot of newspapers; W. W. Wheildon,
 a lot of old maps; besides many publications from
 the various departments of the United States
 government.

THE LATIN VERSION OF 1493

OF THE

FIRST LETTER OF COLUMBUS TO THE NOBLE LORD
RAPHAEL SANCHEZ ANNOUNCING THE DISCOVERY
OF AMERICA. Reproduced in fac-simile by the
heliotype process, with a note and a translation.

IN the Bulletin of the Boston Public Library for April, 1890, an account was given of the purchases made for that Library in the preceding February, at the sale in New York City of the books of the late S. L. M. Barlow. Among them was a copy of the Latin version of the first "Letter, addressed to the noble Lord Raphael Sanchez, Treasurer to their most invincible Majesties, Ferdinand and Isabella, King and Queen of Spain, by Christopher Columbus, to whom our age is greatly indebted, treating of the islands of India recently discovered beyond the Ganges, to explore which he had been sent eight months before under the auspices and at the expense of their said Majesties."

Little is known of the history of this copy of the First Columbus letter before its purchase in 1831 by the late Colonel Thomas Aspinwall, formerly American consul at London, except that it was in the portion of his Library which he sold to Mr. Barlow in 1864. In the catalogue of Colonel Aspinwall's library, printed probably somewhat later than 1831, he appended to the title of this Letter the following note: "The earliest edition of the first document ever published concerning the discovery of the New World: unknown to Robertson, and long supposed to be lost." No attempt is here made to substantiate the claim thus made by

him, and since by others. It is sufficient to say that in the Bulletin of the Boston Public Library for April, 1875, under the title "Roselly de Lorgues," is a bibliographical note upon the different editions of the Letter then known. Dr. Justin Winsor, writing later in the Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society for February, 1890, is of the opinion that the Letter was put into Latin in Spain, and the version carried into Italy. Within a year eight different editions were issued in thin quartos or octavos in black-letter type, — five in Rome, two in Paris, and one in Amsterdam. Of the five Roman editions this Aspinwall-Barlow copy is one, and in the opinion of HARRISSE and others, the earliest. This claim, however, is disputed; yet whatever may be its rank in priority, it is the only known copy of this edition in America. Three copies are now in existence, two of them being in the British Museum.

A fac-simile of the present copy was issued by Mr. Barlow, in 1875, in an edition limited to fifty copies. It is now reproduced with the exactness which belongs to the heliotype process.

The following translation is that of R. H. Major, as printed in his *Select Letters of Christopher Columbus* (London, 1847) — one of the publications of the Hakluyt Society.

First Voyage of Columbus.

A Letter addressed to the noble Lord Raphael Sanchez, Treasurer to their most invincible Majesties, Ferdinand and Isabella,¹ King and Queen of Spain, by Christopher Columbus, to whom our age is greatly indebted, treating of the islands of India recently discovered beyond the Ganges, to explore which he had been sent eight months before under the auspices and at the expense of their said Majesties.

KNOWING that it will afford you pleasure to learn that I have brought my undertaking to a successful termination, I have decided upon writing you this letter to acquaint you with all the events which have occurred in my voyage, and the discoveries which have resulted from it. Thirty-three days after my departure from Cadiz² I reached the Indian sea, where I discovered many islands, thickly peopled, of which I took possession without resistance in the name of our most illustrious Monarch, by public proclamation and with unfurled banners. To the first of these islands, which is called by the Indians Guanahani, I gave the name of the blessed Saviour (San Salvador), relying upon whose protection I had reached this as well as the other islands; to each of these I also gave a name, ordering that one should be called Santa Maria de la Concepcion,³ another Fernandina,⁴ the third Isabella,⁵ the fourth Juana,⁶ and so with all the rest respectively. As soon as we arrived at that, which as I have said was named Juana, I proceeded along its coast a short distance westward, and found it to be so large and apparently without termination, that I could not suppose it to be an island, but the continental province of Cathay. Seeing, however, no towns or populous places on the sea coast, but only a few detached houses and cottages, with whose inhabitants I was unable to communicate,

because they fled as soon as they saw us, I went further on, thinking that in my progress I should certainly find some city or village. At length, after proceeding a great way and finding that nothing new presented itself, and that the line of coast was leading us northwards (which I wished to avoid, because it was winter, and it was my intention to move southwards; and because moreover the winds were contrary), I resolved not to attempt any further progress, but rather to turn back and retrace my course to a certain bay that I had observed, and from which I afterwards dispatched two of our men to ascertain whether there were a king or any cities in that province. These men reconnoitred the country for three days, and found a most numerous population, and great numbers of houses, though small, and built without any regard to order: with which information they returned to us. In the mean time I had learned from some Indians whom I had seized, that that country was certainly an island: and therefore I sailed towards the east, coasting to the distance of three hundred and twenty-two miles, which brought us to the extremity of it; from this point I saw lying eastwards another island, fifty-four miles distant from Juana, to which I gave the name of *Española*.⁷ I went thither, and steered my course eastward as I had done at Juana, even to the distance of five hundred and sixty-four miles along the north coast. This said island of Juana is exceedingly fertile, as indeed are all the others; it is surrounded with many bays, spacious, very secure, and surpassing any that I have ever seen; numerous large and healthful rivers intersect it, and it also contains many very lofty mountains. All these islands are very beautiful, and distinguished by a diversity of scenery; they are filled with a great variety of trees of immense height, and which I believe to retain their foliage in all seasons; for when I saw them they were as verdant and luxuriant as they usually are in Spain in the month of May, — some of them were blossoming, some bearing fruit, and all flourishing in the greatest perfection, according to their respective stages of growth, and the nature and quality of each: yet the islands are not so thickly wooded as to be impassable. The

nightingale and various birds were singing in countless numbers, and that in November, the month in which I arrived there. There are besides in the same island of Juana seven or eight kinds of palm trees, which, like all the other trees, herbs, and fruits, considerably surpass ours in height and beauty. The pines also are very handsome, and there are very extensive fields and meadows, a variety of birds, different kinds of honey, and many sorts of metals, but no iron. In that island also which I have before said we named Española, there are mountains of very great size and beauty, vast plains, groves, and very fruitful fields, admirably adapted for tillage, pasture, and habitation. The convenience and excellence of the harbours in this island, and the abundance of the rivers, so indispensable to the health of man, surpass anything that would be believed by one who had not seen it. The trees, herbage, and fruits of Española are very different from those of Juana, and moreover it abounds in various kinds of spices, gold, and other metals. The inhabitants of both sexes in this island, and in all the others which I have seen, or of which I have received information, go always naked as they were born, with the exception of some of the women, who use the covering of a leaf, or small bough, or an apron of cotton which they prepare for that purpose. None of them, as I have already said, are possessed of any iron, neither have they weapons, being unacquainted with, and indeed incompetent to use them, not from any deformity of body (for they are well-formed), but because they are timid and full of fear. They carry however in lieu of arms, canes dried in the sun, on the ends of which they fix heads of dried wood sharpened to a point, and even these they dare not use habitually; for it has often occurred when I have sent two or three of my men to any of the villages to speak with the natives, that they have come out in a disorderly troop, and have fled in such haste at the approach of our men, that the fathers forsook their children and the children their fathers. This timidity did not arise from any loss or injury that they had received from us; for, on the contrary, I gave to all I approached whatever articles I had about me, such as cloth and many other things, taking

nothing of theirs in return: but they are naturally timid and fearful. As soon however as they see that they are safe, and have laid aside all fear, they are very simple and honest, and exceedingly liberal with all they have; none of them refusing anything he may possess when he is asked for it, but on the contrary inviting us to ask them. They exhibit great love towards all others in preference to themselves: they also give objects of great value for trifles, and content themselves with very little or nothing in return. I however forbade that these trifles and articles of no value (such as pieces of dishes, plates, and glass, keys, and leather straps) should be given to them, although if they could obtain them, they imagined themselves to be possessed of the most beautiful trinkets in the world. It even happened that a sailor received for a leather strap as much gold as was worth three golden nobles, and for things of more trifling value offered by our men, especially newly-coined blancas, or any gold coins, the Indians would give whatever the seller required; as, for instance, an ounce and a half or two ounces of gold, or thirty or forty pounds of cotton, with which commodity they were already acquainted. Thus they bartered, like idiots, cotton and gold for fragments of bows, glasses, bottles, and jars; which I forbade as being unjust, and myself gave them many beautiful and acceptable articles which I had brought with me, taking nothing from them in return; I did this in order that I might the more easily conciliate them, that they might be led to become Christians, and be inclined to entertain a regard for the King and Queen, our Princes and all Spaniards, and that I might induce them to take an interest in seeking out, and collecting, and delivering to us such things as they possessed in abundance, but which we greatly needed. They practise no kind of idolatry, but have a firm belief that all strength and power, and indeed all good things, are in heaven, and that I had descended from thence with these ships and sailors, and under this impression was I received after they had thrown aside their fears. Nor are they slow or stupid, but of very clear understanding; and those men who have crossed to the neighbouring islands give an admirable description of everything they observed; but they never saw any

people clothed, nor any ships like ours. On my arrival at that sea, I had taken some Indians by force from the first island that I came to, in order that they might learn our language, and communicate to us what they knew respecting the country; which plan succeeded excellently, and was a great advantage to us, for in a short time, either by gestures and signs, or by words, we were enabled to understand each other. These men are still travelling with me, and although they have been with us now a long time, they continue to entertain the idea that I have descended from heaven; and on our arrival at any new place they published this, crying out immediately with a loud voice to the other Indians, "Come, come and look upon beings of a celestial race": upon which both women and men, children and adults, young men and old, when they got rid of the fear they at first entertained, would come out in throngs, crowding the roads to see us, some bringing food, others drink, with astonishing affection and kindness. Each of these islands has a great number of canoes, built of solid wood, narrow and not unlike our double-banked boats in length and shape, but swifter in their motion: they steer them only by the oar. These canoes are of various sizes, but the greater number are constructed with eighteen banks of oars, and with these they cross to the other islands, which are of countless number, to carry on traffic with the people. I saw some of these canoes that held as many as seventy-eight rowers. In all these islands there is no difference of physiognomy, of manners, or of language, but they all clearly understand each other, a circumstance very propitious for the realization of what I conceive to be the principal wish of our most serene King, namely, the conversion of these people to the holy faith of Christ, to which indeed, as far as I can judge, they are very favourable and well-disposed. I said before, that I went three hundred and twenty-two miles in a direct line from west to east, along the coast of the island of Juana; judging by which voyage, and the length of the passage, I can assert that it is larger than England and Scotland united; for independent of the said three hundred and twenty-two miles, there are in the western part of the island two provinces which I did not visit; one of these

is called by the Indians Anam, and its inhabitants are born with tails. These provinces extend to a hundred and fifty-three miles in length, as I have learnt from the Indians whom I have brought with me, and who are well acquainted with the country. But the extent of Española is greater than all Spain from Catalonia to Sontarabia, which is easily proved, because one of its four sides which I myself coasted in a direct line, from west to east, measures five hundred and forty miles. This island is to be regarded with especial interest, and not to be slighted; for although as I have said I took possession of all these islands in the name of our invincible King, and the government of them is unreservedly committed to his said Majesty, yet there was one large town in Española of which especially I took possession, situated in a remarkably favourable spot, and in every way convenient for the purposes of gain and commerce. To this town I gave the name of Navidad del Señor, and ordered a fortress to be built there, which must by this time be completed, in which I left as many men as I thought necessary, with all sorts of arms, and enough provisions for more than a year. I also left them one caravel, and skilful workmen both in ship-building and other arts, and engaged the favour and friendship of the King of the island in their behalf, to a degree that would not be believed, for these people are so amiable and friendly that even the King took a pride in calling me his brother. But supposing their feelings should become changed, and they should wish to injure those who have remained in the fortress, they could not do so, for they have no arms, they go naked, and are moreover too cowardly; so that those who hold the said fortress, can easily keep the whole island in check, without any pressing danger to themselves, provided they do not transgress the directions and regulations which I have given them. As far as I have learned, every man throughout these islands is united to but one wife, with the exception of the kings and princes, who are allowed to have twenty: the women seem to work more than the men. I could not clearly understand whether the people possess any private property, for I observed that one man had the charge of distributing various things to the rest, but specially meat

and provisions and the like. I did not find, as some of us had expected, any cannibals amongst them, but on the contrary men of great deference and kindness. Neither are they black, like the Ethiopians: their hair is smooth and straight: for they do not dwell where the rays of the sun strike most dividly, — and the sun has intense power there, the distance from the equinoctial line being, it appears, but six-and-twenty degrees. On the tops of the mountains the cold is very great, but the effect of this upon the Indians is lessened by their being accustomed to the climate, and by their frequently indulging in the use of very hot meats and drinks. Thus, as I have already said, I saw no cannibals, nor did I hear of any, except in a certain island called Charis,⁸ which is the second from Española on the side towards India, where dwell a people who are considered by the neighbouring islanders as most ferocious: and these feed upon human flesh. The same people have many kinds of canoes, in which they cross to all the surrounding islands and rob and plunder wherever they can; they are not different from the other islanders, except that they wear their hair long, like women, and make use of the bows and javelins of cane, with sharpened spear-points fixed on the thickest end, which I have before described, and therefore they are looked upon as ferocious, and regarded by the other Indians with unbounded fear; but I think no more of them than of the rest. These are the men who form unions with certain women, who dwell alone in the island Matenin,⁹ which lies next to Española on the side towards India; these latter employ themselves in no labour suitable to their own sex, for they use bows and javelins as I have already described their paramours as doing, and for defensive armour have plates of brass, of which metal they possess great abundance. They assure me that there is another island larger than Española, whose inhabitants have no hair, and which abounds in gold more than any of the rest. I bring with me individuals of this island and of the others that I have seen, who are proofs of the facts which I state. Finally, to compress into few words the entire summary of my

voyage and speedy return, and of the advantages derivable therefrom, I promise, that with a little assistance afforded me by our most invincible sovereigns, I will procure them as much gold as they need, as great a quantity of spices, of cotton, and of mastic (which is only found in Chios), and as many men for the service of the navy as their Majesties may require. I promise also rhubarb and other sorts of drugs, which I am persuaded the men whom I have left in the aforesaid fortress have found already and will continue to find; for I myself have tarried no where longer than I was compelled to do by the winds, except in the city of Navidad, while I provided for the building of the fortress, and took the necessary precautions for the perfect security of the men I left there. Although all I have related may appear to be wonderful and unheard of, yet the results of my voyage would have been more astonishing if I had had at my disposal such ships as I required. But these great and marvellous results are not to be attributed to any merit of mine, but to the holy Christian faith, and to the piety and religion of our Sovereigns; for that which the unaided intellect of man could not compass, the spirit of God has granted to human exertions, for God is wont to hear the prayers of his servants who love his precepts even to the performance of apparent impossibilities. Thus it has happened to me in the present instance, who have accomplished a task to which the powers of mortal men had never hitherto attained; for if there had been those who have anywhere written or spoken of these islands, they have done so with doubts and conjectures, and no one has ever asserted that he has seen them, on which account their writings have been looked upon as little else than fables. Therefore let the king and queen, our princes and their most happy kingdoms, and all the other provinces of Christendom, render thanks to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has granted us so great a victory and such prosperity. Let processions be made, and sacred feasts be held, and the temples be adorned with festive boughs. Let Christ rejoice on earth, as he rejoices in heaven in the prospect of the salvation of the souls of so

many nations hitherto lost. Let us also rejoice, as well on account of the exaltation of our faith, as on account of the increase of our temporal prosperity, of which not only Spain, but all Christendom will be partakers.

Such are the events which I have briefly described. Farewell.

Lisbon, the 14th of March.

Christopher Columbus,
Admiral of the Fleet of the Ocean.

¹ Mr. Major's translation of the letter itself is faithful to the text of this edition. Variations, however, exist in the title and colophon; no original, for instance, is to be found for the words "and Isabella" in the translated title. All notes, with the exception of the present one, are borrowed from Mr. Major.

² A strange mistake has crept into the Latin versions of this letter; in all the editions of which it is stated that Cadiz was the point from which Columbus sailed on his first voyage. In the journal of that voyage, published by Mr. Navarrete, as well as in the accounts given by Don Fernando Columbus, and all other historians, it is distinctly said that he sailed from *Palos*, on the third of August. The mistake evidently consists in the word "Gadibus" having been by some circumstance, at which we can only guess, carelessly exchanged for Gomera, whence Columbus started, according to the journal, on the eighth of September.

³ North Caico.

⁴ Little Inagua.

⁵ Great Inagua.

⁶ Cuba.

⁷ Hispaniola, or San Domingo.

⁸ Query Carib, the Indian name of Porto Rico.

⁹ One of the Virgin Islands — which, is uncertain.

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